

A NEW RAT FROM ABYSSINIA.

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NEANTHOMYS, gen. nov.

TYPE : *Neanthomys giaquintoi*.

A Rat (*Murinae*) distinguished by its rather slender, not very thick skull with nasals narrow and long, supraorbital region of skull normal, crests very slightly marked, brain-case medium, anteorbital width reduced, orbital plate about half the height of the muzzle and with anterior border not concave, incisive foramina long reaching the tooth-row, bullae rather large. Ungrooved incisors lightly pro-odont showing a subapical notch, teeth-row short, teeth generally small and reduced especially third molar. First molar longer than broad, second molar about as broad as long : M1 longer than M2 + M3, anterior lamina of M1 not reduced.

Limbs and hind feet very short. Tail short (shorter than body without head). Fur thick, but not very harsh or bristly, not showing any body stripe in the known species.

Neanthomys shares with the *Aethomys* Group the character of the 5th digit of the anterior feet reaching the base of the 4th and the 5th digit of the hind feet longer than the great toe.

Neanthomys differs ; from *Zelotomys* Osgood (the genus of the *Aethomys* group showing pro-odont incisors) by its shorter tail, its less soft fur, its skull without considerable interorbital constriction, its cheek-teeth not so strongly cuspidate and broad, its narrower nasals and lower orbital plate ; from *Dasymys* Peters, *Stenocephalemys* Frick, *Oenomys* Thomas, *Rattus* Fischer, *Aethomys* Thomas, *Mastomys* Thomas, *Praomys* Thomas, *Sylvaenus* Ognev, *Myomys* Thomas, *Ochromys* Thomas, *Stochomys* Thomas, by its rather pro-odont incisors and many other characteristics ; from *Arvicanthis* Lesson by its slender and lower skull, narrower and pointed nasals, more reduced anteorbital plate, slender pro-odont incisors and comparatively shorter teeth-row and more folded lamina, less harsh fur and shorter tail ; from *Lemniscomys* Trouessart, as well by its narrow nasals and incisors, longer fifth finger and by the not striped fur ; from *Pelomys* Peters by the less thick skull and non-grooved incisors ; from *Mylomys* Thomas and *Desmomys* Thomas by its non-grooved incisors and many other characteristics.

Neanthomys is distinct from all the genera and subgenera mentioned above having shorter limbs and feet. The length of the hind foot of the type of *Neanthomys* reaches hardly 14.5 per cent. of head and body length, while in *Pelomys* and *Arvicanthis* etc. this percentage is usually higher.

The differences between *Neanthomys* and the other genera of the *Murinae* subfamily are greater.

NEANTHOMYS GIAQUINTOI, sp. nov.

TYPE : adult ♀, Reg. n. 3207, Index No. 1511, Coryndon Museum, collected by Mr. F. Meneghetti at Addis Abeba, 10/7/1941.

Description : Body rather thick and short-limbed. General colour of the dorsal surface yellow-buffy, lined black with a reddish wash all over the head and back. Ears short, brown-blackish in colour with some whitish hairs, posterior base of the ears light buffy like the belly ; chin, throat, neck, white-yellowish ; ventral surface yellowish-buff ; colour rather sharply defined on the sides : fore feet blackish-brown

above, yellowish-white below; hind feet on average the same colour but strongly suffused with yellowish-buffy. Tail short, blackish on the upper surface, whitish below.

Skull: Characters given above as those of the Genus.

Measurements of the type: Head and body 135 mm.; tail 63 mm.; ear 18 mm.; anterior feet 12 mm.; hind feet 21 mm.

Skull: greatest length 30.5 mm.; condylo-incisive length 30.4 mm.; basal length 28 mm.; zygomatic breadth 16 mm.; interorbital constriction 6 mm.; squamosal breadth 13 mm.; length of nasals 10.8 mm.; greatest width of nasals 3.4 mm.; palatal length 13 mm.; length of the palatal foramina 6.5 mm.; length of the upper molar series 5.5 mm.; length of the alveolar series 6 mm.; width of M3 0.9 mm.; length of M3 0.85 mm.; height of the skull (from the end of palate to the vertex of frontals) 8.2 mm.

This Rat belongs to a group of Rodents collected at Addis Abeba at the request of Prof. Giaquinto Mira, Director of that Sanitary Laboratory, during the British occupation (1941-1942) in order to investigate some plague occurrences. The specimens were examined by Marquis S. Patrizi, but the lack of references and collections for comparison did not permit them to be classified. For this purpose a small group of different kinds of Rodents collected at Addis Abeba was sent to E.A., but the identification was not satisfactory at all, being for the most part wrong. About 2 years later when I came to work at the Coryndon Museum Dr. L. S. B. Leakey asked me to classify the mammal collection among which were the specimens sent from Abyssinia, which I can now work out by the aid of the rather rich collections of the Coryndon Museum and the recent references.

In the Coryndon Museum there is only the type of *Neanthomys giaquinto*, but other specimens have been seen by me at Addis Abeba, being part of a small lot of Rats in the Prof. Giaquinto collection.

This *Neanthomys giaquinto* was trapped in the gardens and fields all around and inside the town of Addis Abeba and brought alive to the local Sanitary Laboratory.

This Rat seems to show most of the habits of Grass Mice (*Arvicanthis*, *Lemniscomys*, etc.) but no particular field researches were made in order to investigate this subject. The short limbs and feet with rather strong claws support the idea of a digging, ground, Rat.

I name this genus after Addis Abeba (Amharic translates as "New Flower") and this species after Prof. Giaquinto Mira to the interest of whom is due the finding of this very peculiar and interesting mammal.

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